Tax Commission

Internal Scan

A. How will the changing demographic as a result of an aging population affect your agency's overarching policy issues, direction, program considerations, changing constituency needs, and management concerns?

Business Considerations

- The agency has ongoing interaction with literally every citizen of the state through administration of the state's tax and motor vehicle registration processes. As the overall population has been growing each year, we strive to improve processes and implement efficiencies on an ongoing basis. Growth in the overall population and related workload is an ongoing concern. Forms, instructions and bulletins need to be as clear as possible.

- Electronic filing and the over-all use of the internet should increase since the baby-boomer generation is more comfortable with these technologies than the previous generation.

- Multiple options should be allowed for the completing transactions and for payments of taxes and fees in order to make compliance easier.

- The management of the agency will likely turn-over in the next 10-20 years, and much historical knowledge may be lost.

- Overall tax policy is established by the Governor and the Legislature. If changes are needed to accommodate an increasing age of our citizen base, they will need to be well informed of the issues as part of their annual legislative session work. This could be for simplification, clarity, or to provide assistance to low income individuals.

Health Considerations

- If the baby boomers are less active and less healthy than they are now, special accommodations for more people may be necessary.

- Phone sections may need to provide more equipment for the hearing impaired.

- More or larger signs may be needed to direct citizens to office locations.

- More Disabled Vehicle Plates and Placards may be required.

Financial Considerations

- More individuals may become eligible for Income Tax retirement credits, and low income deductions.

- As more of the population ages, there may be more citizens that are on fixed incomes. As property values increase and as localities raise taxes to keep up with inflation, citizens limited to a flat income can have serious problems being able to keep up with their property tax bills.

- Monitoring of these trends are important now and in the future in order to respond in a timely manner to issues that may come up.

B. If your agency has begun to address the impact of the aging population, describe what you are doing to address or respond to these anticipated changes, including identified priorities, overarching policies, programs, etc.

Business Considerations

- As the overall population has been growing each year, we strive to improve processes and implement efficiencies on an ongoing basis to help accommodate ever increasing numbers of transactions. Since the baby-boomers are already in our service base, we do not expect a significant increase in our workload that is specifically driven by an elderly population. If we keep up with overall growth, we should be able to cover any specific impacts that an aging population may have on our services.

- We currently strive to write tax and motor vehicle forms, instructions and publications as clearly as possible. We try to provide written materials to match the reading level of the general population, and expect this to continue in the future. The size of print may become an issue if more people find it harder to read a standard font size.

- The baby-boomer generation is likely to be more familiar with electronic filing and use of the internet, so as they age, it may result in a larger percent of the citizen base using these options. Promoting the use of these options is an on-going priority.

- Motor Vehicle Renewals can now be done online, by mail, and at approved emission stations so a separate visit to the office is not needed.

- Since turnover in management is expected, thorough training of the next generation of managers should become a priority so they can efficiently carry on the business for years to come.

- Overall tax policy is established by the Governor and the Legislature. If changes are needed to accommodate an increasing age of our citizen base, in the future they will need to be well informed of the issues as they come up. As part of their annual legislative session work, they might want to make policy changes for simplification, clarity, or to provide further assistance for those having low or fixed incomes.

Health Considerations

- If the baby boomers are less active and less healthy than they are now, offices may need to be structured to handle more seniors with health issues. This may include increased senior citizen parking, and lowered windows in offices for customers who must sit or be in wheelchairs to conduct their business.

- Phone sections may need to provide more equipment for the hearing impaired.

- Forms and instructions may need to be changed to accommodate a larger than normal font size. Online computer screens can also be adapted to provide larger viewing area for those requiring it. Instructions could be provided on web sites on how to turn on this computer feature.

- More or larger signs may be needed to direct citizens to office locations. We try to accommodate the needs now, and will continue to do so in the future.

- More Disabled Vehicle Plates and Placards may be required. We will want to monitor this program to ensure that any increased workload can be accommodated.

- The agency may have to provide more direct assistance to citizens if the baby boomer generation becomes less able to complete their transactions due to declining health, or financial considerations.

Financial Considerations

- More individuals may become eligible for Income Tax retirement credits and low income deductions. This may require more edits or reviews of the adjustments on the forms.

- As more of the population ages, there may be more citizens that are on fixed incomes. As property values increase and as localities raise taxes to keep up with inflation, citizens limited to a flat income can have serious problems with higher property tax bills. More applications for Circuit Breaker relief could be realized. These requests are processed by the Counties for low-income home owners, and are processed by the State for low-income renters.

- Legislators may need to consider more financial aid to those in low income homes or those on fixed incomes. If they make future changes, the agency will strive to accommodate resulting impacts.

Monitoring of all of these trends is and will continue to be a part of our ongoing review process. Adjustments in resources or workload priorities may be needed over the next twenty years to handle issues if there are significant increases in any of these areas.

Priorities

A. Prioritize your agency (division) policy issues, direction, programs, management issues, etc. related to an aging demographic in the population. List the most important issues for your agency (division).

The Tax Commission does not anticipate any *significant* workload impacts with the aging of baby boomers since that age group is already in the population base that we currently interact with in providing tax and motor vehicle services. The few key issues that we will pay particular attention to for potential impacts will include the following:

1. If there is significant turnover of management in the next 10-20 years, much knowledge and historical perspective may be lost. We will need to have a proactive approach to ensure that the potential next generation of managers are being developed and trained.

2. Providing clear forms, instructions and publications will continue to be a priority as the tax and motor vehicle laws change each year. If formats or font sizes become a concern to a large portion of the population base, changes may need to be incorporated to accommodate this. A benefit of online applications that we may want to highlight is the use of computer screen views that can be customized to the font size any user may desire.

3. Providing online access to agency information, forms, and publications, and offering other out-of-office alternatives to citizens will continue to be a priority for the agency. If the overall population base becomes incrementally less mobile, it is hoped that they will be more willing and able to use out-of-office alternatives. Tax transactions can be completed through the mail, and many of them can be done online. Motor vehicle registration renewals can also be done online, though the mail, or through an authorized emission station in order to avoid an office visit.

If these citizens still need or desire in-person service, we may need to be prepared to adapt offices to accommodate them. Phone sections may also need to purchase additional equipment for the hearing impaired if those needs increase.

4. On an ongoing basis, we will monitor trends in workload and in the citizen base

with whom we interact in providing tax and motor vehicle services. As stated above, we do not expect any significant impacts to workload since the baby boomers are already in our population base, though possible *shifts* in emphasis may be necessary.

While most of our work is cyclical in nature, we should be aware of any significant changes in trends as they begin to develop. Impacts expected *might* include, but would not be limited to:

-a need to issue more disabled vehicle plates or placards.

-an increase in Income Tax credits or deductions which may suggest a change in emphasis on edits or review processes on these parts of the tax return.

-a shift in staffing may be needed if more circuit breaker applications are submitted from low income individuals.

Monitoring of all workload trends will need to continue to be an integral part of our over-all planning strategy each year.

Planning

A. What action can your agency take in the next two years to address the priorities you have identified that reflect the impact of the aging population? Consider collaborative approach with other agencies and divisions and how such collaboration could fit into an overall state planning process.

B. What are the results you expect to achieve through your recommended actions? List several indicators that would measure your agency's progress in achieving these goals.

1. Potential turnover of agency management

Actions: Agency leadership will have accessed current management positions, and

the individuals that perform these functions.   Identification will be made of those persons that may be leaving the work force in the next several years as they become eligible to retire.   Any key positions will have a potential succession plan that would include development and training of numerous potential candidates who could transition into the positions without significant impact on agency day-to-day operations.

Results: We will have a succession plan in play for key management. We will

have trained employees that will be more prepared to take over when others retire that we would without this plan.

2. Provide clear forms, instructions and publications

Actions: We will continue to have the priority of ensuring that information provided by the Tax Commission is as clear and useful as possible. Given that tax and motor vehicle laws are fairly complex, this provides us an ongoing challenge, especially when those laws are subject to legislative changes each year.

We will continue to make this a priority, and if there are particular concerns or problems identified by an increase in the age of the state's overall population, we will try to address it in the next update. If the current font size in forms and publications becomes an issue, we may have to consider increasing the number of pages used to print information. This would result in a printing price increase as well as an increase in forms mailing costs.

Since the baby-boomers may be more likely to use the internet than the previous generation, we may want to encourage citizens requiring larger font sizes to use the online alternative, and adjust the font on their computer screen to the level desired.

Results: We will be prepared to provide clear forms, instructions and publications to citizens of all age groups. Each year we will review our forms, instructions and publications to ensure that new law changes are clear and to ensure over-all understandability of the information provided.

3. Provide online access and other out-of-office alternatives

Actions: We will continue to provide and promote online use and other alternatives to citizens that may otherwise want to visit an office. If the aging population becomes less mobile due to health issues, we will want to encourage the use of out-of-office alternatives including the internet and mail. Citizens may become more willing to use these options if getting places becomes more difficult for them. It will be incumbent on us to keep online and out-of-office alternatives an ongoing priority, and to seek making these options easy for the general population to use.

Results: We will be prepared to provide alternative resources for filing and registration processes and access to agency information, or will provide other accommodation to meet citizen needs.

4. Monitor trends in workload and citizen needs

Actions: The agency will need to continually monitor workload trends in case the aging of its existing population changes in any particular segment of the services we provide. Also, as citizen needs may change as the overall percent of the population ages, we will want to be monitoring those trends to determine how any changes may impact our workload and planning effort. This monitoring of trends will be an integral part of our over-all planning process each year.

Results: We will be monitoring trends in workload and in the needs of the citizens with whom we interact, and will be flexible in accommodating any changes that may arise.

We plan to keep on top of any changes that an increased aging population may have on our workload or the citizens with whom we interact for tax or motor vehicle transactions. Since the baby-boomer generation is already in our population base, we do not expect any *significant* impacts to our workload, rather a possible shifting of emphasis, if deemed necessary.

We plan to monitor our tax and motor vehicle systems and processes on an ongoing basis to ensure that citizens of the state are provided the information needed to comply with the state laws that are applicable to them. This will include review of any issues that may arise from a larger segment of the taxpayer population reaching elderly status. During the upcoming years, if any trends highlight a significant difference in the way we need to provide this information and service because of a more elderly population, the agency will be prepared to respond in an appropriate manner.